

Approved August 30, 2023

**Advisory Committee Meeting
Zoom Video Conference
Wednesday, June 28, 2023, 6:30 p.m.**

Those present from Advisory Committee included Shawn Baker, Doug Smith, Madison Riley, Rani Elwy, Gail Sullivan, Pete Pedersen, Jenn Fallon, Christina Dougherty, Wendy Paul, and Andrea Ward.

Others in attendance Meghan Jop, Executive Director, Sheryl Strother, Finance Director; Lise Olney, Chair, Select Board; Tom Ulfelder, Select Board; Colette Aufranc, Select Board; Beth Sullivan Woods, Select Board.

Chair Shawn Baker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Vice Chair Doug Smith took roll call attendance.

Meeting video can be viewed here [June 28, 2023](#)

Citizen Speak

There was no one present for Citizen Speak.

FY23 Year-End Transfers

Meghan Jop and Sheryl Strother presented requests for FY23 year-end transfers. This is a year-end process allowed by state law to address unanticipated expenses and provides the opportunity to present the reasons for the transfers in a public forum. These are not emergency transfers (which would need to be authorized by Advisory) but rather are shortages in various budgets which were not evident at the time of Annual Town Meeting; year-end transfers need to be approved by the Select Board and Advisory before being authorized.

Advisory Committee

The Select Board with approval of Advisory Committee is requesting to transfer to personal services from the expense budget to resolve FY23 overage.

Andrea Ward made, and Madison Riley seconded a motion for favorable action on the proposal by the Select Board to transfer \$4,200 from the Advisory Expense budget to the Advisory Personal Services budget for the purpose of meeting current and anticipated year-end obligations not previously approved by Town Meeting.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
Doug Smith – yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Rani Elwy - yes
Christina Dougherty - yes
Gail Sullivan – yes
David Prock -absent
Susan Clapham - absent
Neal Goins – absent
Andrea Ward – yes

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The motion to transfer \$4,200 from Advisory expense budget to Advisory Personal Services was approved, 10 to 0.

Building Department

The Building Department brought in \$3 million in permits this year. This request is to fund the overage in personal services due in part to the need for completing necessary inspection work and use of part-time hours.

Andrea Ward made, and Jenn Fallon seconded a motion for favorable action on the proposal by the Select Board to transfer \$8,000 from the Building Department Expense budget to the Building Department Personal Services budget for the purpose of meeting current and anticipated year-end obligations not previously approved by Town Meeting.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes

Doug Smith – yes

Al Ferrer - yes

Wendy Paul – yes

Pete Pedersen - yes

Madison Riley – yes

Rani Elwy - yes

Christina Dougherty - yes

Gail Sullivan – yes

David Prock -absent

Susan Clapham - absent

Neal Goins – absent

Andrea Ward -yes

The motion to transfer \$8,000 from the Building Department expense budget to the Building Department Personal Services budget was approved, 10 to 0.

Legal

An unanticipated personnel matter caused the legal budget to be higher than that budgeted. For FY23 Since FMD is a Select Board department, the transfer can be requested from unspent FMD funds to cover the legal expenses incurred by the Town..

Questions

- A question was asked if the unexpected personnel matter was in the FMD department.
 - Not necessarily as FMD is a SB department, for example, custodians, utilities, and maintenance fall within the SB budget and not the schools.
- How does this affect FMD's turnback since the money is coming from FMD?
 - These funds would be their turnback and will impact the overall turnback amount. We are making a public declaration that there was excess capacity in one department and over budget in another department. It is understood that a number of positions at FMD went unfilled during the course of the fiscal year, resulting in unspent funds. The town is not legally allowed to expend funds beyond those appropriated. This transfer allows us to resolve year-end issues, so we don't have deficits. The legal costs have been expended. The request gives the transparency and reasons for the transfer. This is different than Advisory's emergency transfer. These are operating issues that occur during the year, and this is a one-time item that put the Town's legal expenses over

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budget. We are identifying the funds that are available. No funds are turned back until the FY23 books are closed.

Andrea Ward made, and Gail Sullivan seconded a motion for favorable action on the proposal by the Select Board to transfer \$35,000 from the FMD High School Electricity Expense budget to the Legal Services budget for the purpose of meeting current and anticipated year-end obligations not previously approved by Town Meeting.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
Doug Smith – yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Rani Elwy - yes
Christina Dougherty - yes
Gail Sullivan – yes
David Prock – absent
Susan Clapham - absent
Neal Goins - absent
Andrea Ward - yes

The motion to transfer \$35,000 from FMD HS electricity expense budget to the Legal Services budget was approved, 9 to 0.

Fire Department

Due to the six (6) vacancies in the Fire Department, the department found itself in a position of using overtime to staff the fire shifts. The positions were a challenge to fill because of the wait time for placement in the Fire Academy. In addition, there were several illnesses and injuries this year. Therefore, the Fire Department was paying other fire fighters' overtime to cover the vacancies. The vacancies in other departments create excess funds but not in the Fire Department. The Fire Department is mandated to have specific positions staffed. Concern was expressed about a structural deficit.

Questions

- Is this out of the ordinary and how does this compare to last year?
 - Last year the transfer need was \$65,000.
- A question was asked on the timing of the transfer because at Annual Town Meeting (ATM) there was a motion under Article 7 for \$30,000 for on-going expenses. A question was asked if a deficit this large could have been anticipated at ATM.
 - We were tracking it however we didn't realize the deficit would be this large. There have been additional absences since ATM. Also, there was vacation time that needed to occur. It was hoped that with the six (6) new firefighters the deficit would not have grown as much.
- What does a structural deficit mean? What do you see going forward?
 - We need to look at personnel. When the unified dispatch system was implemented, we lost dispatchers from the fire department who could jump on the shift if needed.
- Since large amounts of funds are being taken from FMD, do they need this money to run the department?

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- There have been substantial vacancies in FMD with positions unfilled throughout the entire year. Funds that are available now (2 days before the end of FY23) are because of vacancies.
- What are we doing about all the vacancies in town?
 - Wellesley is not unique. Municipalities are having a challenge in hiring.
- FMD had vacancies as well so why does the Fire Department need money?
 - Fire is a 24-hour operation and staffing levels are mandated. FMD is not a 24-hour operation. In addition to the vacant fire department positions, the fire department paid staff that were out either on medical or injured on duty leave. The Injured-on-Duty Reserve Fund does not cover the overtime needed to cover a role. The Reserve fund helps pay medical claims, surgery, and treatment.

Andrea Ward made, and Jenn Fallon seconded a motion for favorable action on the proposal by the Select Board to transfer \$370,000 to the Fire Department Personal Services budget, from the following accounts: \$100,000 from the FMD Middle School Custodian Personal Services budget; \$90,000 from the FMD High School Custodian Personal Services budget; \$85,000 from the IT Department Personal Services budget; \$85,000 from the Police Crossing Guard Personal Services budget; and \$10,000 from the Finance Department budget for the purpose of meeting current and anticipated year-end obligations not previously approved by Town Meeting.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes

Doug Smith – yes

Al Ferrer - yes

Wendy Paul – yes

Pete Pedersen - yes

Madison Riley – yes

Rani Elwy - yes

Christina Dougherty - yes

Gail Sullivan – yes

David Prock - absent

Susan Clapham - absent

Neal Goins - absent

Andrea Ward

The motion to transfer \$370,000 to the Fire Department Personal Services budget from the sources outline in the above motion was approved, 10 to 0.

FY23 Annual Report Recommendations

The draft FY23 Annual Report recommendations were presented by Advisory chair Shawn Baker.

Questions/Discussions

- A comment was made that the HR recommendations capture Advisory’s discussions. An additional comment was made that it makes sense for the schools to set the lens for viewing the budget at start the beginning of the year. In particular it was suggested that a fuller discussion on enrollment at the initial presentation by the schools might be very useful in subsequent budget discussions.
- Concern was expressed about use of “rapidly increasing” in the recommendation regarding the school budget. It was pointed out that Wellesley Public Schools continue to track with peer communities in terms of spending. It was further commented that the schools indicated that there

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might not be a significant reduction of FMD costs with 6 schools versus 7 schools. In addition, there are still expenses for teachers, the students, and the program. However, it was felt that the Advisory recommendation about the school budget sets the expectations for the discussion and for improving communication about budget drivers.

- A comment was made that it is complicated regarding teachers. The schools don't necessarily decrease staff headcount when reducing the number of FTEs.

Andrea Ward made, and Madison Riley seconded a motion for favorable action on the Advisory Committee's FY23 Annual Report recommendations as shown.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
Doug Smith – yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Rani Elwy - yes
Christina Dougherty - yes
Gail Sullivan – yes
David Prock - absent
Susan Clapham - absent
Neal Goins – absent
Andrea Ward -yes

Advisory Committee's FY23 Annual Report recommendations were approved, 10 to 0.

FY24 Advisory Officers

Chair Shawn Baker presented the slate of officers for the FY24 Advisory Committee.

Andrea Ward made, and Christina Doherty seconded a motion that the Advisory Committee accept the proposed slate of officers for FY2024, to include:

Chair: Madison Riley
Vice Chair: Wendy Paul
Vice Chair: Gail Sullivan
Secretary: Susan Clapham

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
Doug Smith – yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Rani Elwy - yes
Christina Dougherty - yes
Gail Sullivan – yes
David Prock - absent
Susan Clapham - absent
Neal Goins - absent

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Andrea Ward – yes

FY24 slate of officers was approved, 10 to 0.

New Business

- Chair Shawn Baker and Vice Chair Doug Smith reported that the Advisory Operations Administrator role had been created to support the work of the Advisory Committee. It was noted that due to the large cohort of new committee members each year (one-third) and that Advisory does not fall within a particular Town department (from which it might receive support) that responsibilities of the new Operations Administrator position were especially important to the work of Advisory.
- Bill Schaufler was thanked for his service on the committee; he is resigning for personal reasons.
- Appreciation was expressed to outgoing members of the committee.

Minutes Approval

Andrea Ward made, and Doug Smith seconded a motion to approve the May 24, 2023, minutes.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes

Doug Smith – yes

Al Ferrer - yes

Wendy Paul – yes

Pete Pedersen - abstain

Madison Riley – yes

Rani Elwy - yes

Christina Dougherty - yes

Gail Sullivan – yes

David Prock -absent

Susan Clapham - absent

Neal Goins – absent

Andrea Ward - yes

May 24, 2023, minutes were approved, 9 to 0 with 1 abstention

Liaison Reports

NRC/Al Ferrer – an update of the last meeting was provided- a draft order of sound and light conditions at Hunnewell field is being prepared and the NRC will coordinate with the School Committee; concern was expressed about gas-powered leaf blowers; there will be a field study regarding the fields being upgraded; and a tree canopy study as the expansion of housing and new houses require trees to be cut.

Schools/Jenn Fallon – provided an update of the School Committee meeting including new staff introductions; nursing overview and food services overview; pickleball was discussed; Craig Mack is the new chair.

DPW/Pete Pedersen – update of the June 13 meeting was provided. PFAS readings on Rosemary pumping station are heading in the right direction; Stormwater enterprise fund implementation was discussed for next year; it is too early to know what the PFAS litigation means.

Select Board/Doug Smith – BESS agreement moving forward with Citizen’s Energy; the SB has extended the police chief contract for 2 years. DPW settled 2 agreements with the union.

Recreation/Wendy Paul – there are on-going discussions on pickleball. A working group for the Morses Pond project has been created but the first meeting has not yet posted.

PBC/Wendy Paul – the building projects are well underway: Town Hall renovation; Hardy School and Hunnewell School

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Planning/Madison Riley – update of last week’s meeting was provided. Planning spent most of the meeting on 125 Oakland (Sisters of Charity) and they are looking at a different change in the zoning which would permit the property to continue to be used for senior care. Planning would like to bring this before Town Meeting in the fall. The proposed development at 8 Cliff is another project under discussion which may potentially come to Town Meeting.

Adjourn

Andrea Ward made, and Christina Doherty seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Roll Call Vote

Jennifer Fallon – yes
Doug Smith – yes
Al Ferrer - yes
Wendy Paul – yes
Pete Pedersen - yes
Madison Riley – yes
Rani Elwy - yes
Christina Dougherty - yes
Gail Sullivan – yes
David Prock -absent
Susan Clapham - absent
Neal Goins - absent
Andrea Ward - yes

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. 10 to 0.

Meeting Documents [June 28, 2023 meeting materials](#)

- Draft FY23 Annual Report Recommendations